

Whoever finds his life will
lose it, and whoever loses
his life for my sake will
find it.
Mt 10:39

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

June 22, 2007

Stewardship—The Condition of Our Soul—Part VI

6:00 – 6:05	1) Coffee & Donuts 2) Opening Prayer
6:05 – 6:15	1) Previous challenges: a) Take 5: [1] 5 min reading the Bible, 5 min in meditation, 5 min in prayer; 2) praying with your family]? 2) Review a) All belongs to God (Gen 1) b) We are stewards of ALL that God has created: material things and ourselves. c) Possessions are mentioned three times more than love in the Bible. Stewardship is God’s way of raising people; we should beg to participate (2Cor 8:1-5) d) Everything must be secondary to seeking Jesus (Phil 3:7-11) e) You will find you cannot do stewardship on your own. God must do the work in us. f) We give because God gives; we are made in his image g) Declare God as our Lord and trust that he will provide (Mt 6:33) h) We are to be seen but to hide it (from myself) i) Why are we lukewarm? (Rev 3:16) 3) The Pace of Life <i>We have learned how to make a living, but not a life; we’ve added years to life but not life to years.</i> ¹ <i>We’ve cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul.</i> <i>We’ve split the atom, but not our prejudice.</i> <i>We plan more, but accomplish less.</i> <i>We’ve learned to rush, but not to wait.</i> <i>These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw-away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.</i> <i>It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom.</i>

¹ Author unknown. Quoted in *Running on Empty*, 17.

- a) Perhaps it is not that we actually work harder in our jobs
 - i) In 1880, the average workday was 10 hrs²
 - ii) In 2005, the average workday was 7.5 hrs³
- b) Maybe we just don't know how to be content⁴
 - i) In 1960, over half (52 percent) of the family households consisted of married couple with children. In 2000, nuclear families with children account for just over a third (35 percent) of U.S. family households—eclipsed for the first time in history by single-person households.
 - ii) The most dramatic change in the workforce is the inclusion of women—61 percent of women work today compared to just 38 percent in 1960. The shift from single-earner to dual—earner families fueled the rise in household income, and household vehicle ownership, and such phenomenon as the decline in multi-occupant vehicles and the rise in trip chaining.
 - iii) Looking at the same metropolitan areas in 1960 and 2000 shows the growth of population and workers in suburban counties by far outpaced the growth in central counties.
 - iv) From 1960 to 2000, the average vehicles per household rose from just over 1.0 to about 1.7, an increase of almost two-thirds.
 - v) By 2000, an increasing number of workers were commuting over one hour to and from their jobs on an average day.

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

--Phil 4:11-13 NIV

4) The cost is to our soul

- a) Our culture-driven need for accomplishment and for activity has influenced our relationship with God
 - i) We risk creating God in the image of our boss and ourselves in the image of good employees

*What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.*⁵

b) What is the condition of your soul?

² <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-0507%28199203%2952%3A1%3C129%3AHLWTWI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8&size=LARGE&origin=JSTOR-enlargePage#abstract>

³ <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm>

⁴ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ctpp/jtw/executive.htm>

⁵ A.W. Tozer. Quoted in *Running on Empty*, 36.

⁶ Abbot John Eudes Bamberger to Henri Nouwen. Quoted in *Running on Empty*, 73.

5) Importance of solitude and silence

When you are faithful in [silent meditation]...you will slowly experience yourself in a deeper way. Because in this useless hour in which you do nothing “important” or urgent you have to come to terms with your basic powerlessness, you have to feel your fundamental inability to solve your own or other people’s problems or to change the world. When you do not avoid that experience but live through it, you will find out that your many projects, plans, and obligations become less urgent, crucial, and important and lose their power over you.⁶

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

--Joshua 1:8

Blessed is the man who...delights in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

--Ps 1:1-2

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don’t do any work—not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days God made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore God blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.

--Ex 20:8-12

6:15 – 6:45	<p>1) Find a quiet place in the church.</p> <p>2) Read the following passage slowly and thoughtfully:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">--Luke 6:12-16</p> <p>3) Meditate on the passage. Put yourself in the scene and wonder as you watch it unfold (known as Ignatian prayer). Use your imagination: What is Jesus praying? Why is it taking so long? What’s going through the disciples’ minds as Jesus is choosing?</p> <p>4) “Listen” to what God may be saying to you through the text.</p> <p>5) Contemplate how the text might make a difference in my life.</p> <p>6) Sit in silence with God.</p> <p>7) Close by thanking him for meeting you in prayer. Amen.</p>
6:45 – 7:00	Group reflection
7:00	Closing Prayer

Further reading:

- The *Bible*
- Willmer, Wesley K. *God & Your Stuff*
- Cushman, Ralph Spaulding. *The Message of Stewardship*
- Brother Lawrence. *The Practice of the Presence of God*
- Anderson, Fil. *Running on Empty*
- Piper, John. *don't waste your life*
- Hughes, R. Kent. *Disciplines of a Godly Man*
- Murray, Andrew. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*